

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The action by the Examiner in this application, together with the cited references, has been given careful consideration. Following such consideration, claims 16, 21 and 31 have been amended to delete reference to a “divalent state.” In addition, claim 21 has been amended to refer to “lead dioxide.” It is respectfully submitted that foregoing amendments place claims 16, 21 and 31 in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 3, 11, 17 and 23 have also been amended to eliminate reference to a “divalent state.” Claims 17 and 23 have further been amended to indicate that the metal oxide in a tetravalent state interacts with a sterilant in a “catalytic reaction.”

The Examiner has rejected the claims primarily in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,196,052 to May et al. Applicant acknowledges the Examiner’s comments with respect to the May et al. reference, but respectfully submits that the May et al. reference does not teach, suggest or show a metal oxide in a tetravalent state that exhibits a catalytic reaction with hydrogen peroxide. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims in their present form, that define a metal oxide in a tetravalent state that exhibits a catalytic reaction with hydrogen peroxide, are distinguishable from the May et al. reference which is silent as to a metal oxide that exhibits a catalytic reaction.

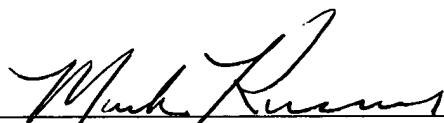


Application No. 10/663,593
Amendment dated January 25, 2006
RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION dated January 10, 2006

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the claims in their present form in view of the foregoing comments, and allow the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 25, 2006


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Date: January 25, 2006


Christine Goellner